

Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month

May 1 - 31, 2021

The Civil Rights Division is recognizing Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month



Employee Spotlight



Melanie Smith

Transportation Project Specialist, Maintenance Asset Management Office

She loves cooking, especially Asian food. She learned how to cook Filipino food from her mother and she loves using food as a way to share her culture. She also is a dedicated dog mom and loves doing outdoor activities with her fur child.

Joined TDOT Family June 2017

Tell us about a moment in Asian American History that influenced or shaped your career/ life?

Not sure about Asian history, but my first visit to the Philippines as a child had a huge impact on my life. The aging infrastructure there inspired me to pursue Civil Engineering.

Who within or outside TDOT has been influential in your career? Are they a mentor today?

Jerry Hatcher has been very influential in my career and has always seen my potential. He values diversity and has always provided valuable guidance and advice.

Which of the TDOT Values (Stewardship, Integrity, Safety, Consistency, Development, Innovation, Collaboration & Family) that are listed within the Strategic Plan, resonates with you and with diversity? State why?

Collaboration and Family resonates with me. In my role, it's so important to build relationships in the field in order to provide solutions through our contracts. The Asset Management Division has always felt like a family to me which makes it easy to work together and collaborate.

Why is it important to recognize Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month, especially in 2021?

I think it is important to take time to recognize and celebrate different cultures. As a Filipino-American I am very proud of my culture and it is a huge part of my identity. America is a melting pot and we should celebrate all of our differences.